

October 25th, 2022 Sermon: Baptism by Fire Part 2: Flood

MEDITATE

Read Matthew 3:13-17.

Jesus' baptism has some amazing and complex symbolism, which connects to important Old Testament stories. It is intertwined with the story of Noah; when we see the dove resting on Jesus, we're reminded of the dove. It delivered the olive leaf as a sign of dry land in Genesis 8:8-12. And Matthew 3 further intertwines with the story of Moses; the same word for "opened," when the heavens were opened, is used when the Red Sea was divided in Exodus 14.

Read 1 Peter 3:21. Does baptism save or judge? It does both. The same water that judged the evil people saved Noah and his family. And the same water that the Israelites walked through swallowed up the Egyptian armies.

Is God's presence a protection or threat to you? What makes the difference?

EQUIP

What are the waters that we are baptised into? In the Bible, the word for primordial waters is *tohu*. It is a symbol of chaos, like the empty and formless void waters in Genesis 1. God works through water and chaos to remove evil, like the Flood and Exodus.

The Bible mysteriously describes God judging the divine beings: created spiritual persons who rebelled against God. **Read Psalm 82:1-3 and 6-7.** While it might sound strange to think about divine beings in the Bible, we are not talking about polytheism. While there may be other spiritual beings, there is only one Creator God. Only God can deal with the chaotic *tohu*.

Chaos and wilderness bother us because they remind us we are not the Creator. We have envied the Creator ever since Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan. Anybody who doesn't recognize God as Creator is a mad king.

What are some examples of *tohu* in our world and in your life? How do you frame those experiences? How do you manage stress and emotions?

Will you follow Christ through the wilderness like the pillar of fire and cloud? Will you enter into Christ like the ark, and be saved from the flood? Or will you remain in the city of man, and be judged?

CULTIVATE

What does it mean to have a good conscience? It is the freedom that you experience when you recognize God as the Creator. You are saved through the waters and the wilderness. You cease to envy God. You have the humility and confidence to call out evil. You can apologize when you do wrong. You know the condition and direction of your heart

Do you feel the Holy Spirit hovering over your negative emotions? Do you feel the Holy Spirit convicting you of your mad thoughts, attitudes or behaviors? Do you feel the Holy Spirit healing your heart?

Are you willing to be baptized and saved once and for all? And are you willing to begin the everyday journey of baptism?